

Your Excellency Bishop Doran, distinguished guests, friends and family members. Welcome. And when I say family members, I don't just mean those people I am related to, I mean all of you who make up my Aquin family.

Let me explain. Aquin students typically spend ten out of the sixteen waking hours in a day at school – going to class, playing sports, rehearsing for activities, and working on service projects. That amounts to fifty out of eighty hours per week away from our biological families. With the love and support of the people who have helped us become who we are today, Aquin has become a second home, our second family.

You teachers have become like parents because you've taught us much more than just academics. We have learned to treat each other with respect and to care for one another through your examples. Some of these lessons were difficult, like how to get along with people we may not have liked. Some lessons were harsh, like when we all had to watch Chase walk up to the front of the room in the middle of kindergarten story time to write his name on the board. It was a very scary moment for all of us, but it was done out of love, right Mrs. Feiner?

We haven't always agreed with our teachers, just as we sometimes disagree with our own parents, but we will leave Aquin with fond memories – Mrs. Schirmer's bellwork questions turning into a speech, Fr. Bolger's homilies, or Bill's rules number one and number two. We know you teachers were doing what was best for us, even if we didn't always appreciate it. On behalf of all your children in the class of 2010, thanks!

The siblings in our Aquin family are our classmates. Most of us met in kindergarten and have grown up together; while other classmates joined us along the way. We love each other even though we sometimes argue and complain. We support each other but we are

also very competitive – no one wants to lose to a brother or sister! Some of the hardest competition all year long are when we play against each other during the Homecoming games. Those water balloon tosses could be intense! Together, however, we are unstoppable. We cheer each other on and become an amazing support system through the good times and bad. We are the best super fans and we are always there to pick each other up when we need it, even if sometimes that encouragement leads to mischief – like not stopping Eric from putting a paper clip in the electrical outlet in history class. We have shared tears and laughter, hard times and joy, and we will always have each other in our hearts.

Being a student at Aquin basically implies that at one point or another in your high school career you will play a sport, join a club, be in the play or volunteer to help. The coaches, directors and advisors are like the aunts and uncles in our Aquin family. Most of us have an aunt or uncle who inspires us to be the best we can be and most of us also have that crazy aunt or uncle who you can only respond to with a smile and a nod! You just have to love them and their strange ways. Our coaches have taught us valuable lessons – like how to accept a challenge, to achieve goals, and to be a team player. They have inspired us to be better people and to always work our hardest – even when we knew what they were saying was simply crazy. Just remember, smile and nod!

Most families also have a special pet - a cute little dog or a cuddly cat who can be annoying, but you also know you can't live without them. We could compare our pets to the underclassmen at Aquin. They can be annoying, but we truly love them and have shared some great times - challenging them in class competitions, working together on projects, dancing with them at dances, celebrating team victories and sometimes accepting defeat with them. We will miss you but we know that you are ready to be the big "dogs" now. However, you all should remember, we are the best senior class ever, Mrs. Runte even said so.

But most importantly, what keeps any family together is having God at the center. We are lucky at Aquin because we are able to learn, and live, and love our faith. Our teachers help us to become knowledgeable about scripture and church history, but the real advantage we have is the ability to pray together, especially during the hard times. this past year I will never forget stopping during our volleyball doubles to have a prayer service for our teammates mom and the unfortunate many times we've supported each other at funeral masses. Thank you parents for making the financial sacrifice to send us to a Catholic school and thank you to the church for all your support over the years.

We graduates are blessed to have our own loving, unique families, but I also believe we are extremely fortunate to have grown up in the Aquin family. These two families have made us stronger than most graduates and after we leave here today, I know we will all flourish. We received a wonderful education – we know how Hamlet was killed, we can differentiate an equation, and can recite the Preamble to the Constitution. But we also received so much more – valuable lessons and memorable friendships that will last a lifetime.

After this summer, we will leave this safe home and go our separate ways, taking with us our our hearts, our confidence, and our dreams. So dream big class of 2010, and live life to the fullest knowing that whenever we need it, you will always have a family at Aquin.

Thank you.